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HOLLINGSWORTH

AND

## MODERN POETRY.

A CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY

## ESSAY.

BY

GEORGE SEXTON, M.A., PH.D., F.R.G.S., F.E.S., &c.,

EDITOR OF HOLLINGSWORTH'S WORKS.

"Pictoribus atque poetis  
Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas."

"Authors are partial to their wit 'tis true,  
But are not Critics to their judgment too?"—*Pope*.

"There is such a thing as literary fashion, and prose and verse have been regulated by the same caprice that cuts our coats and cocks our hats."—*Disraeli's Curiosities of Literature*.

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1858.



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TO THE  
RIGHT HON. BENJAMIN DISRAELI, M.P.,  
THE MAN WHO COMBINES IN HIMSELF  
THE HIGHEST LITERARY GENIUS  
WITH THE  
TALENTS OF A GREAT STATESMAN,  
THE  
FOLLOWING ESSAY  
IS HUMBLY AND RESPECTFULLY  
DEDICATED  
BY ONE OF HIS WARMEST ADMIRERS,  
THE AUTHOR.



## PREFACE.

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THE greater portion of the following Essay was composed for the purpose of being read before the Literary Branch of the St. James' Discussion Society. It being afterwards thought advisable to have it published, I considerably extended it, adding several quotations from Hollingsworth's Poems; and hence its present form. The object had in view has been to explain some of the peculiarities of a Poet, who although but little known at present, bids fair hereafter to occupy a prominent position in British Literature. This was all the more necessary as most of his critics had completely misunderstood him. Whether I have succeeded in my task, must be left for the reader to judge.

GEORGE SEXTON.

LONDON,

*September 1, 1858.*



## HOLLINGSWORTH, ETC.

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### AN ESSAY.

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It has been the good fortune of but very few poets to awake and find themselves famous. Those who have done so form a very rare exception to the general rule. The most have had to climb the high craggy steep that leads to immortality. Many have done this but to glory in their laurels for a day ; and then, wearied and worn out, to sink into their last resting-place. Others, despairing of ever reaching the goal, have in the spring or summer of their lives died exhausted in the ascent. But with them the world has sympathised ; and, pitying their failures and sorrows, freely bestowed upon them when dead the glory which was grudged them whilst living. As was said of Homer—

“Seven cities contend for Homer dead,  
Through which the living Homer begged his bread.”

The very death of some men seems to have been necessary to make them known to fame. What was Chatterton before his melancholy death?—What, Kirke White?—What, Keats?—What, even Shelley? All but the latter died despairing of fame ; and no wonder, after the cruel reception the world gave them. The grave closed over them ; their epitaphs were inscribed upon their tombs ; and then—not till then—were they recognised as “men of genius.” Man is a truly feeling creature where his sympathies cost him nothing. If another Chatterton, begging, entered our doors with starvation in his face, we should recommend industry and perseverance ; we should remind him of our own struggles, our large families, poor relatives ; and treat him exactly as his predecessor of the

eighteenth century had been treated by the hard-hearted contemporaries of that period. But sympathy for a dead Chatterton is a very different thing. He cannot again return to life with all those faults and failings which made him disagreeable or ridiculous: he raises neither our bile nor our envy, nor does he touch either our pride or our pockets. Then comes real sympathy; and with it, very often, extravagant praise. While reading the works of the afore-mentioned men of genius, we never lose sight of their melancholy history. Whilst we are admiring the poet, we are unconsciously sympathising with the man. The tragic romance of their lives adorns their verses: their sufferings have set their songs to sad enchanting music. Many passages, even in their best works, we should bitterly ridicule, did the memory of their afflictions not forbid us to be sarcastic. We kindly pass over their blemishes, to look for their beauties; and thus frequently worship the dead, where we should not hesitate to bury or crucify the living.

So sad is the history of our literature! Its list of unfortunate Poets is longer than that of all Continental Europe. This is so true, that it is worthy of the inquiry: what is its cause? Is it in our English climate, education, or institutions? We had already a long list of those who were accurately described by Shelley:

" Most wretched men  
Are cradled into poetry by wrong:  
They learn in suffering what they teach in song."

Now, we may add another. With their names will henceforth be associated that of Alfred Johnstone Hollingsworth. He, like some of them, passed through life unnoticed and unknown; but now that he is dead, the world condescends to inquire: "Who was this unfortunate being?" His history has already been told by most of our leading journals. *The John Bull* of the 6th September, 1856, gives it as follows:—

"A singular biography of the author, by an anonymous friend or enemy, for the narrative makes him appear in either relation, is prefixed to a volume of Poems, of which the greater portion is occupied by "*Childe Erconwold, a Spell of Love and War*," incident during the Norman Conquest. The

biography is sadly interesting. Since the days of Savage, perhaps, there has not been such an exhibition of the effect produced upon genius by the stain of illegitimacy, and the punishment by society of the son for the errors of the parent. Mr. Hollingsworth, it appears, had no title to that name; and was kept in ignorance of the stigma attached to his birth, until, falling in love, he was compelled to seek information relative to himself, in order to gain access to the family of his enchantress. Upon application to his tutor, the subsequently nameless biographer, that gentleman acted with such utter want of judgment, as could only be paralleled by the heartlessness of the lady's parents. A rupture ensued forthwith between all parties, and poor Mr. Hollingsworth, an "anybody," who, it seemed, loved with the intense sincerity of a poetical temperament, departed from the country of his disappointment a broken-spirited man. Henceforth, like a second Childe Harold, or Cain, he became literally a wanderer on the face of the earth, travelled into various countries, and studied the language and literature of a host of nations. During his peregrinations, he composed many poetical works. Some of his poems are framed upon the model of the Erse ballads, are quaint and pathetic in their household vernacular, and abound in Anglo-Saxon expressions and allusions: the author having been completely a master in that, as in many other languages. Indeed, he appears to have been a second Mezzofanti. His end was in sad consistency with his painful career: from one spot of blighted affection, all his course was a long avenue of aimless dejection, and we have never read so complete an instance of a man watching the growth of his grey hairs with pleasure, and longing for the end of the scene. When yet but thirty-five, "he had lost all youthfulness, and become a pale, sorrowful-looking man. Notwithstanding traces of early beauty, he appeared ten years older than he was. His general appearance was that of a man who had grown old before his time;—of one whose body was always on the rack of his mind." As might be expected, the finest passages of the volume before us are those

between Ercon and Melitha ; where the thorough appreciation of a loving girl's tenderness is exquisitely portrayed. Doubtless his own sufferings attuned this Poet's lyre, like Anacreon's, to the melody of love. All readers will peruse this portion of the work with the same admiring melancholy as that with which we watch the tempered grandeur of the setting sun. After having taken his passage to America 'to see,' as he said, 'the falls of Niagara,' he fell a victim to the cholera, on board the *Isaac Wright*; though, in the fearful mortality which happened on this fated vessel, no tidings could be obtained as to any particulars of his death until an unclaimed portmanteau and carpet-bag turned up. Moreover, even the very cause of this volume's publication was an advertisement inserted in the *Times* by a casual friend ! Such is the fate of genius !—tossed in this world between the injustice which punishes misfortune, and the heartless ignorance which crushes feeling ! ”

What can be added to this ? With painful brevity it tells the worst that is contained in the memoir prefixed to the only volume of his works at present published. This biography itself is a mere sketch. It was wilfully intended to be no more. The writer of it carefully avoids all that is not absolutely necessary to be stated ; and, to shield himself and others, gives us but the bare surface of Hollingsworth's history. The biographer knew well that by detailing and particularizing, he must soon have committed himself, and disclosed secrets which he was bound not to divulge. For the present then, we must be satisfied with this morsel of biography. Time unveils all. When the offenders shall have passed away with the offended, the rest must come to light. So much “en passant” for the life of Hollingsworth.

In this essay we have to deal with the Poet rather than with the man ; to explain his literary progress ; to relate the incidents which influenced it ; and to shew, as far as possible, by a reference to his note-books, diary, and MSS., what must have been the principal articles of his poetical creed. That he bound himself strictly to some particular

laws of his own, there cannot be the least doubt. There is throughout his writings unquestionable proof of this. For my own part I must dissent entirely from his biographer, when he tells us that Hollingsworth never intended his poems to be published in their present state. Nor can I at all agree with his tutor, and others of his critics, who consider his many deviations from the rules of their beau-ideal of Poetry, to be the result of care and slovenliness. Those deviations are everywhere too studiously introduced, to have been caused by carelessness. It may be easily shewn that Hollingsworth formed a theory; and, in defiance of existing schools, endeavoured to found one after his own heart. To this he referred when he wrote—

I care nought for what wiggéd Learning say;—  
 For Latin Doctor's frown, or critic's dart.  
 If I should die not with my fleeting day,  
 I'd live in every good old woman's heart;—  
 Be known to John the Boots, to Poll the nurse,  
 And judged by loving maidens of my land :  
 Then, down with Mystics! Mine shall be the verse  
 That men may study; children, understand.

His reasons for not publishing should not have been so mysterious to his reverend tutor, since they are clearly given in the following lines:—

"I too have sinn'd in verse,—have chisell'd rhymes;  
 But see this age praise high its balderdash;  
 And call 'Sublime!' what ne'er was aught but trash:  
 So, leave my books to worms or better times.  
 They're in my trunk: where wits or mice may feed.  
 When HOLL is dead, up, Critics! and condemn.  
 Some friend may find—nay, haply, publish them;  
 And take unto himself all praise and meed.  
 They'll be no worse, if so, for coming late.  
 And I shall then have kept my peace of mind;—  
 Have lived among the lowliest of my kind  
 Far from that little world men call, *The great.*"

To pass on, however, to the style of Hollingsworth. He seems to have looked back to the Ancients, to have reviewed the Moderns, and at last have sighed, "There is nothing new

under the sun!" He beheld the Poets of our own day mistaking the wildly singular for the original. He saw the Americans, by striving to over-top us in every thing, produce what we should long ago have originated, had it been worth the production. He felt that such rhyme writers as Longfellow and Martin Tupper, by drilling our English muse to dance to the tune of the Latin Hexameter, or to the harum-scarum prose of "Hiawatha," were sacrificing poetry at the shrine of a morbid fashion. He found the author of Proverbial Philosophy—or Proverbial Platitudes—egotistically exclaiming:—

"Many thoughts, many thoughts; who can catch them all?  
The best are ever swiftest winged, the duller lag behind;  
For, behold in these vast themes my mind is as a forest in the West,  
And flocking pigeons come in clouds, and bend the groaning branches."

He looked through the book for some of these thoughts which came in flocks like pigeons; but, alas! they had winged their flight in some other direction, for here not one could be found. He calmly meditated on such language as the following:—

"By the shore of Gitche Gumee,  
By the shining Big-Sea Water,  
At the doorway of his wig-wam,  
In the pleasant summer morning,  
Hiawatha stood and waited."

He saw our Lakers whine over buttercups and find in them

"Thoughts which lie too deep for tears."

He heard them exclaiming:—

"And 'tis my faith, that every flower  
Enjoys the air it breathes."

He saw our Spasmodics spit fire in the wild ravings of their moon-gazing Festuses; and their chief describe a Poet, evidently a Spasmodic, thus:—

"All things talked thoughts to him? The sea went mad,  
And the wind whined, as 'twere in pain, to shew  
Each one his meaning; and the awful sun,  
Thunder'd his thoughts into him."

Their gentle, loving Lucifers, too, preach like mad metaphysicians, and tell us—

“God hath no attributes, unless To BE,  
Be one: ’twould mix Him with the things He hath made.”

Surely, thought Hollingsworth, this is frightful—almost blasphemous—twaddle, and can never be looked upon as originality.

“Oh, ye shades  
Of Pope and Dryden, are ye come to this!”—

brought into communion with buttercup-gatherers, Hottentots, and gentlemanly demons. It is so difficult, he thought, in this wonder-teeming age to rise above the level of our fellows. In aiming at the original, we overshoot the mark, and hit the grotesque and the singularly ridiculous. The so-called geniuses of our day, by putting on the monkey’s tail, may certainly appear different from their grandfathers, but they are none the more original, and none the more great.

Despising such originality, and too proud to be a copyist, Hollingsworth ceased to write verses, and gave his mind to philology. But this course of procedure was doomed to be of short duration. A chance circumstance led him accidentally into a track which he had so long fruitlessly endeavoured to discover. It happened, as his diary informs us, that one day, while in Brussels, he sauntered into the Royal Library. His eye chanced to fall upon a small English-looking volume, which lay open on the library-table. He took it up. It was the Anglo-Saxon old epic, *Beowulf*, with Kemble’s translation. He sat down, and gazing on its Gothic characters forgot “Belgium’s capital” and all around him. His curiosity thus excited, he determined upon learning the noble old language of our glorious King Alfred. To this contract with himself, he remained faithful during his subsequent wanderings;—in noisy hotels, in the din and clamour of city life, amidst the bustle of travelling, the charms of Paris, and the voluptuousness of Spain, he still remained true to his purpose. Nothing could allure him from his somewhat monkish com-

panion. After many years of study, his mind became so imbued with all that was Anglo-Saxon, that he lived but in the England of the eighth century;—forgot our mechanical, railway, telegraphic, Great Britain of the present time, to ponder on the monkish but heroic times of Edmund Ironsides and Harold. So deeply was his mind coloured with Anglo-Saxonism—if I may coin a word—that he thought and dreamed in the language of those bygone heroes. But, while he was thus living in the past, and dead to the present, a circumstance occurred which changed his whole character. To drag him out of his old world, Destiny had to raise a mighty spirit. What was this? Why, a spirit, the influence of which most of us have felt, in the form of a young English lady. In other words, he became subject to that passion or temporary madness in man which makes some particular woman appear divine. He flung aside antiquities. The fire which had smouldered in him during his wandering book-life now suddenly burst, and became the raging Vesuvius of his soul. The “fayre ladie” had suddenly transformed the musty antiquary into the fiery lover. Then it was that he became a Poet, and felt the truth of Shakspeare’s lines:—

“Never durst poet touch a pen to write,  
 Until his ink were temper’d with love’s sighs.  
 O then his lines would ravage savage ears,  
 And plant in tyrants mild humility.  
 From women’s eyes this doctrine I derive:  
 They sparkle still the right Promethean fire;  
 They are the books, the arts, the academies,  
 That shew, contain, and nourish all the world.”

The dead language so long studied—now quickened, as it were, by this passion—became in him a living tongue. Into it he poured the love-yearnings of his fiery spirit; giving that forgotten speech new life, making it yield to rhyme, and to all the laws of modern versification. One of his Anglo-Saxon MSS. comprises a whole Dramatic Poem, in almost every kind of modern verse. Others are somewhat smaller productions; some, simply translations. Curious it is to see,

amongst the latter, Richard's "Now is the winter of our discontent," &c.—Milton's "Satan's Address,"—Schiller's "Hector,"—part of Byron's "Fare thee well," in the language of Venerable Bede and Alfred the Great.\*

In a review of the first edition of Hollingsworth's Works, in "The Critic," of December 1st, 1856, a kind of comparison was made between him and Chatterton, to the disparagement of the former. The remark made was as follows:—referring to the somewhat mysterious biography, the reviewer proceeds: "We have no desire to lift the veil from this concealed personage, the less so because the subject of it is really not a man of mark. If a Chatterton were the subject, then every fact in his history would have its weighty interest." Now, though comparisons are said to be odious, and it may be somewhat of a digression, we may inquire here, how does Hollingsworth appear compared with

"That marvellous boy,  
That sleepless soul, who perished in his pride?"

FIRSTLY, then, Chatterton chose Old English: which was no more than his own language in an ancient dress: having the same words slightly changed, the same grammar, the same construction. He had not to deal with another language, but merely with another form of his own. His most difficult task was no more than to put modern words into their Old-English coat—to give them the periwig of antiquity. After a little reading of old writers, what witchcraft would there be in this?—in writing, for instance, Wickednesse for Wickedness—Chivalrie for Chivalry; and so forth, according to a few general rules? He required but to write his verses first in English, and then translate them into this obsolete and antiquated form.

The most wonderful fact connected with Chatterton was, that all this was done, for the first time, by a youth of seventeen, who shortly afterwards poisoned himself. He performed here one of the fine tricks of Genius, the greatest beauty of

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\* See Appendix.

which consists in their having been done; and in our knowing that they, therefore, can be done. Who cares to see them done twice? Were a youth of our day to do Chatterton's "trick" even better than he did, it would be flat and stale, because it had been done before; and the presumptuous imitator would be scouted. "The Bristol Boy," we have seen, then, dealt not with another language, but merely with another form of his own. The following lines of old Sir Thomas More will shew a similar form or stage of our language:—

"Without my fauour there is nothyng wonne.  
 Many a matter haue I brought at lāst  
 To good conclusion that fondly was begonne.  
 And many a purpose, bounden sure and fast  
 With wise prouision, I have overcast.  
 Without good happe there may no wit suffice.  
 Better is to be fortunate than wyse."

But Hollingsworth wrote poems in a dead language, which in construction and grammar is as different from his own—and equally as difficult to deal with—as Latin or Modern German. To compare it with the above quotation we may take the following lines:—

"Hú ne eart þú se mon þe on mínre scole waére afed and gelæred.  
 Ac hwonon wurde þú mid þissum woruld sorgum þus swiðe geswenced.  
 Buton ic wát þæt þú hæfst þára wæþna tó hraðe forðiten þé ic þé ær  
 sealde."

He had, by long and intense study, to convert it apparently into a living language: till he made it do what it had never done before—flow to modern rhyme and metre. This, too, it may be said, was no more than one of those "fine tricks." Certainly. But it was far more difficult than Chatterton's, and will, like his, be never again attempted.

SECONDLY, Chatterton had all the Old-English literature for his resources. Hollingsworth had but fragments of Anglo-Saxon. He had no English-Anglo-Saxon Dictionary. It did not, and does not exist. There is but an Anglo-Saxon-English. This he must have transferred to his memory, or have made

an English-Anglo-Saxon, for, otherwise, he could no more have found the exact words which he wanted, than an Englishman, learning French, could find any particular French word by searching through a French-English Dictionary. Chatterton had no difficulty of this kind;—no difficulty at all in getting at the words, modes of expression, phrases, and idioms: they were all before him in the works of the old writers; and, if not there, they were, in another form, in his own language.

THIRDLY, Chatterton had all the old Poets and Dramatists for models. Of their poems and dramas, he had no more to do than to produce a fine imitation. Hollingsworth found nothing to copy: he had no models—no Poets,—for of such, in our sense of the word, there is none in Anglo-Saxon. He was, therefore, superior to Chatterton in this too,—that he did not imitate, but created; that he was the beginning and the end, the root and the trunk of all that may be called Anglo-Saxon Poetry in modern versification. Chatterton, on the contrary, did no more than imitate—than graft another branch upon an old withered tree which long before his day had been planted. This comparison, it will be said, deals severely with the marvellous boy. It must be borne in mind, however, that it has been provoked by the assertions of “The Critic.”

To return, however, from this digression, we come at once to the style of Hollingsworth. We have seen him first turning away in disgust from our modern schools;—despairing of originality, give up Poetry, and devote himself to Anglo-Saxon. We have beheld him, driven from his studies, become a hot-brained lover;—thereupon, a Poet in that dead language. We now find him, after all this—after the lapse of several years—return to his mother English: and commence poetising in this melancholy strain:—

I long have ceased to live below;  
Or, lived but for to moan and pine.  
No wife, no child, no friend, is here;  
Ah! nothing in the wide world more  
Than this poor harp and memory dear,  
To tell of blissful days of yore.

What a change study and passion had wrought in him! He

had become another man—a modern monkish, love-sick Abelard, consoling himself with—

What is most loved, we fear so much to lose,  
That even its *very having* is a care.  
But nought can reave the Poet of his Muse,  
Whatever want and sorrows he may bear.  
In this true friend, I set my hope and trust ;  
Since all that was most dear, is false or dust !—

He now devoted his time to writing what may be called, Anglo-Saxon English. Such we find in his *Childe Erconwold*. It is English, but not the English of other Poets ; it is peculiarly his own. The following quotations may give a slight idea of the distinguishing characteristics of his language :—

To love thy wife,—all those of *thy* dear mind ;  
To praise thy friend ;—help him who help *thee* most :  
These are the *beggar-virtues* of mankind,  
Which even the lowest savages can boast.

But thou, proud Byron, still wilt live and please ;—  
With all thy faults, with all thy shameful wit,  
With all that I too wish had ne'er been writ,  
Still have the *soul-unlocking* “golden keys ;”—  
Wilt still be found in that *far-looming* age  
A great *heart-mover* in Old England's page.

Where 's now the laugh ?—the step so quick and light ?—  
The gleeful eye ?—the heart of late so boon ?  
Ah, that one ill hour thus can wreck or blight !—  
That aught so fair should droop so soon !

That originality which he had sighed for, had now become his by long study,—by the ravings of passion—and the force of circumstances. From an analysis of his style it would appear to be based upon the following facts :—

FIRSTLY, Never to make a Saxon speak what is not of Germanic origin. Where modern English failed, he used the obsolete, as the last of the above quotations shews ; or he coined from Anglo-Saxon :

“ 'Tis in the *team* of *things* that nought should last,—  
Young go with young, and old ones be *forecast*.”

Our Norman and Latin-English, that is, the English of the present day, he seems to have had intense hatred for; sarcastically putting it into the mouth of his petticoated monks,—learned men—and effeminate Normans. These alone he allowed to speak it.

SECONDLY, That every hero should have his own peculiar metre, suited to his age, temperament, and character. We hear the old monk Wilfrid speak in the calm philosophical language of the student—

Lost gold is found : lost hours are lost for aye.  
Let time, young man, be deem'd thy dearest store.  
Life is an inn where thou wilt dwell a day ;—  
Go soon the long old road, and come no more.

Young fiery Erconwold and angry Volmár, employ the quick and abruptly passionate language—

“She’s a beau | ty, *par Gamm !* | —too good | for those Bret | on boors !

The phlegmatic Gerboúd drawls his words out, as though he counted them ;

“Would’st have them here ? Well ;—well, then, I will see.”

The gentle Melitha sighs the soft feminine language of love—

“Thus let our sin  
Teach us to rue ; and rue, to love our kin.”

“The sun ne’er shone o’er aught so dear as he !”

While Volmár gabbles in rapid anapaests and dactyles, Gerboúd generally drawls in slow spondees. All this is as in Nature. Though we all speak English, each has his own individual English,—English as peculiar to him, as his walk, his tone of voice, his features and expression of countenance. Hollingsworth imitated this in verse ; and he is the only Poet that has done so. He would not, like Milton, have made Satan and Gabriel—angels and devils speak in the same metre. He would have given to Othello and Juliet very different poetical languages. All Shakspeare’s heroes speak in the same Iambics, only varied now and then by a spondee or a Trochee. But where the great master descends to prose, he

generally gives to each speaker a peculiar language. This is done in our best novels. Hollingsworth accomplished it in verse. The following extract will explain this. It is from the part where Melitha pleads to her husband Gerboúd, for the deliverance of her lost lover. Every speaker, it will be seen, has his own peculiar language, though all speak in five-footed verse:—

“ GER. I never heard, LETICHE so follow'd thee?

VOL. It does, sire,— | it does : | it al | ways fol | lows me. |

MEL. Redeem him from such hard death! O, my lord!

Our time is as a gust that rushes by;

But it will dure in England's Chronicle:

Where other ages—races yet unborn

Will read of all;—hoot 'Shame!' at these sad days;—

Tell how this land was rack'd and sorrow-smitten!

Then let it be that, on the woe-dark page,

Thy good deeds shine;—that there, bright gilded, stand—

'GERBOÚD did well in our poor Saxonland!'

GER. We'll think—I cannot trow that ERC is there,—

VOL. I'll take my oath on't, sire! My head on that!

MEL. Why should *I* bid so? Art not thou my lord?

All hopes of him are blighted!—lost for aye!

Dead is dear ERCON!—dead, his dear MELITH!

'Tis *thy—thy wife* who bids;—and yet not;—Nay,

'Tis Heaven's still might, that bows the hearts of kings

'Tis meek kind Charity, who sees his wounds;—

A blesséd angel, mourning at our side,

And whispering to thy wife this prayer for him!

Shut not the gate upon these heavenly ones,

Lest ill betide! And, oh! the heartening thought

Of having thus redeem'd a poor lost brother,—

What healing cheer in all life's woe 'twill be!—

What gladdening, soul-uplifting thought to thee!—

VOL. Let wounds weep blood; but woman's eyes in tears—

Those watery drops unman me!

GER. If I sent,—

But then,—I do not know DISÁRD so well.

MEL. O nay, my lord!—let not thy good will halt!

O send, but send!—Behold me at thy feet!

When thy strong castles,—when yon holy church,—

When the bright palaces in ruins mould,—

When I, and thou, and all around are dust;—

Oh, then, as never-crumbling monument,

This good work yet above will bear thy name ;—  
 Yet blesséd stand rear'd in the Hall of Heaven !

VOL. Nay, *Sainte Croix* ! At *this*—See her thus weep and kneel !—  
 What cold-cold-hearted man !

GER. Well, MELITH. But—

MEL. Yet flits my lord ? Give not ill *Nay* to this !—  
 Thou hast three props,—Gold, Kinsmen, and Good Works.  
 But Gold forsakes thee when the death-king nears ;  
 For, nought more liking, it can give thee nought.  
 Friends bear thee to the grave ; then turn away,  
 And read thy will. But Good Works follow thee—  
 Rise with thee to the blesséd Throne of Heaven ;  
 And, as fair angels, plead for mercy there !  
 O be not hard, then ! Do one kind work more ;  
 For never erring man had fitter time  
 To prove his goodness ! Let it not go by ;  
 For Heaven hath sent it thee, that thou may'st have  
 Such pleader for thy sins !

VOL. Nay !—Dear | soul !—My eyes— |  
 But see *him* !—like a post there !

THIRDLY. He modified this individual language to the temper, humour, or passion of the speaker. A hero, for instance, naturally lively, becoming from some cause anxious, afraid, or sorrowful, drops at once his quick, joyous anapæsts, and sighs in sad spondees. We see this in the above extract, where Volmár, moved by the tears of Melitha, says,

Let wounds | weep blood ; | but wo | man's eyes | in tears | —  
 Those watery drops unman me !

Should the cause of the hero's anxiety be removed, should he accomplish some dear object, suddenly he changes accordingly to his general lively metre. We see Volmár doing this on the above occasion, after having gained his object :—

Then, rise, | my good la | dy ! Leave | the rest | to me. |

But, better still, is this displayed in the part where Ercon returns home :—

He sees from there his home :—Lo, now is nigh !  
 How blest to gaze once more on all around !  
 His heart | *is so glad* ! | and yet—It fears—But why ?—  
 He rides as though his steed trode holy ground.

We find here, amongst many spondees, a sudden anapæst, expressing the fluttering of the heart; its youthful thoughts, afraid to rise amidst so many fears. These are well expressed by the slow, solemn march of the last line.

My mother!—Twelve long months from this dear spot!  
 My sister!—Heaven! That we but meet again!—  
 Still nought?—No blaze yet from yon lonely cot?—  
 Ah, dread betidings may have been since then!

But his fears are in vain: he finds all well, when suddenly the Poet flies to the quick joyous:

Oh! What bliss, | after roving alone, |  
 To clasp | in our arms | some dear | ling one!— |  
 After | the storms | of the raging | main, |  
 To greet | our friends | and home | again!  
 What was his happiness, east or west,  
 To that which he finds in his mother's breast!  
 What are the sights of old glorious Rome  
 To that of his own dear English home!

There is not a line in Childe Erconwold which has not thus been studiously suited to the character, emotion, and subject described. The consequence is that Hollingsworth, frequently in one page, rushes from one metre to the other—going from iambs to anapæsts even in the same stanza.

FOURTHLY. Metre, he contended, should be adapted to the subject or action described. He hated that cut-and-dried uniform style of all our poets, particularly of Pope and the French school, which describes a funeral and a wedding—a tempest and a calm—a raging battle and a gentle twilight—in the same one everlasting metre. He could not conceive how a warrior could mourn over his defeat and rejoice over his victory in the same four or five-footed iambic verse;—how quivering Fear, wild Enthusiasm, deadened Despair, and fluttering Joy, could all alike be bound apprentice to speak in stanzas of the same form—in lines of the same feet and length, cut and measured, as it were, by the yard-stick.

Striking out his own path in this, he has left us a work which is a perfect Dictionary of metres. No poem in any lan-

guage contains such a variety. Some forms of stanzas are of his own creating ;—some are of old masters ;—some, of foreign origin, never before attempted in our language. Just as the “subject-theme may gang,” he goes from the heroic to the ballad ; from the ballad, or lyric, to the heroic, or to the blank verse.

We have here, for instance, in solemn blank verse, the description of the interior of the chapel in a monastery :

“ ’Tis spring of day. A lamp, on gilden desk,  
Burns yet within the chapel of the monks,—  
Is glimmering o’er a bright illumined book :  
Where pale grave WILFRID, pondering deeply, reads.  
All is so still in solemn twilight-gloom ; —  
So light, albeit, that thou may’st faintly see  
The Virgin’s image near a high gilt cross ;  
Where that of dying blesséd JESUS hangs.”

Here young Ercon enters, and is lectured by the old monk, in his own metrical language ; for what has the metre selected by the Poet for the description of the chapel to do with that chosen by the monk for moralizing ? In other words, by what poetical law is the monk bound to continue this blank verse of the Poet ? He prefers his own metre, and says,

Trust not spring’s ice ; nor lurking snake at rest ;  
Nor new-sown field ; nor words,—least, wavering girl’s :  
For fickleness dwells in her lily breast ;  
And woman’s heart is like the wheel that whirls.  
Trust not to wealth ;—oft scatter’d in a day !  
What hast thou when the golden bird is fled ?  
Flocks, friends,—all die ; thou too must soon away :  
But one thing lives—the Doom upon the Dead.

In the next chapter we have the bright sunny morning described, and have therefore a lively metre :—

Where is ERC ?—’Tis growing late :  
Earth’s great gladdener higher shines.  
Look now at yon archéd gate,  
Where the honey-suckle twines :  
Where a young horse, sheenly dight,  
Neighs so loud ; and paws to run.  
See thereon our youthful knight  
Glittering in the morning-sun.

Then again, in slow, sad metre, we have a battle-field covered with the slain, as seen by moonlight :—

'Tis night. Now friend and foe sleep on that ground.  
O'er those cold ghastly cheeks, the moon-beams play :  
While lank wolves of the forest howl around ;  
And greedy ravens croak above their prey.  
Who thought at noon, that, back of such fair day,  
Night lower'd so grim !—that *this* could ever be,  
As on the sunny green they gamed so merrilie !

And then, in the next chapter, the merry-making at the village is described in merry-making metre :—

The tid | ings are come | to Hal | lentun !  
Oh, eve | ry heart | is so fain !  
Away | with our fears ! | The battl | e is won !  
Old Eng | land lives | again !  
Our old men, while their children play,  
Tell how times were and are :  
Their daughters dream of wedding-day ;  
Their sons, of glorious war.  
Glad ruddy farmers with their wives  
Sit round the village-inn ;  
While gleemen throw high balls and knives—  
Bear poles upon their chin.

The same consistency everywhere prevails :—

Now the terror-stricken Saxons, running, shout “They come ! they come !”

Wailing women, wild, despairing, hurry aghast from babe and home.  
Quaking monks, with cross and missal, fleeing, chant or say a prayer.  
All would shelter at yon castle,—find a home—they know not where !

Now see yon couch, where poor MELITHA lies ;  
With kirtle rent ; loose torn, long, golden hair ;  
With cheek so white ; and tearless, soft, blue eyes  
Fixed on the ground in sad, cold, death-like stare.

In this we see from the castle the victorious Normans marching rapidly towards us. But the Poet had to describe at the same time the dying, despairing Melitha. Each subject must have its becoming metre ; for surely that which is suitable for a marching army must be quite unsuitable for a pining lady. All this must have cost him great labour.

Hear how mourning Melitha is joyfully surprised by the return of her lover :—

I bade thee sing away my care and fear ;  
 But thou art more to gloom us than to cheer ;—  
 Ha ! What | —What hor | ses ? It was | —Ha, hark ! | the drum !  
 The band | —Lo, hith | er—Good saints ! | They come ! | they come ! |  
 'Tis my ER | con ! Heav | en ! Oh, tell | him—Away ! | away !

The sudden leap here from sorrow to joy is executed in a masterly manner.

Who does not see the rough, swearing, bragging, exaggerating old soldier in the following metre :—

EARL. Our English there were *eighty thousand men* !

ERC. Indeed, my lord ?

EARL. *My blood ! I say but right !—*

What glorious troop ! Saint Chad !—I say *again*,—

I tell thee,—On my *troth*, as *worthy knight*,

As *Halltun's earl*,—Such was our glory then !

Yes, ERC, believe me,—*Ninety thousand men* !

Kormak, a kind of mad Swedenborgian seer, speaks a language which differs from that of any other character in the book :—

What elvish mood,—what fifel bloody crime  
 Makes thee to wander at this unked time ?—  
 To walk the grey one's road like outlaw'd thrall ?—  
 To come where spae-wives dwell, and ling-eels crawl ?  
 Love-blinking maid will make thee sorrow less.  
 There's nought for *thee* in this drear unkedness.

This language is as much his own as that of the witches in Macbeth is theirs.

How much is described in—

Now war-horses, clattering, gallop along !

Or in the following line, picturing an angry man—

He, stamp | ing out ire, | goes, mut | tering, quick | to and fro.

Or this—

But fiery hasting ERCONWOLD

Stamps,—walks about, and strikes his head.

Here the metre is "ajar:"—

Outlandish wonts have made them what they are.  
 Since they | came home, | *they've lived* | *so ajar* |  
 With all that is.

Mark in the following the vesper-bell's constant recurrence:—

Knows yon sweet bird the tale those lovers tell?  
 It hears their whispers. All is lulling still  
 But tender bleating lamb, or murmuring rill;  
 Or humming beetle, over-bubbling well;  
 Far lowing herd, 'mid peal of vesper-bell,  
 That sounds from o'er the neighbouring dell.

Or here:—

He heeds them not;—is bound with awful spell:—  
 At home again!—He sees dear Haltun-towers;—  
 Hears *well*-loved Mersey purl;—still Even's *bell*,—  
*The same old bell* he heard in childhood's hours.

Notice in the following an army in rapid pursuit of another suddenly stopped:—

Now begins a fearful rout.  
 O'er the bridge the foemen hie;  
 While, with loud victorious shout,  
 Following quick, our English fly.  
 "*Halt!*"—On the bridge, lo! Norway's ruler stands;  
 Waves boldly there his long sword, dripping gore;—  
 Full anger raging, calls his fleeing bands;  
 And will not let a Saxon o'er.

The old monk leads the young hero from his Melitha, and cautions him against fostering an affection doomed to disappointment. The youth angrily replies:

Away! Thy swarthy mood  
 Makes all the world as black as is thy hood!—  
 Angels to fiends! It cannot—ne'er can be!  
 She loves me, monk!—she loves me! Can'st not *see*?

WILFRID. But, if ne'er thine, what would'st—

ERCON.

What would I say!

What would I say if God now shatter'd all?—  
 Now dash'd to dust and atoms Earth's great ball;—  
*Brake down* the world;—let moons give up their race;—  
*Suns drop, and blazing fly through boundless space:*

While lightning *flash'd*, deep thunder *crash'd*,  
 And star with star and planet *clash'd*,  
*Grim corsers whirling!* What—If all thus *warring*,  
 And ever *jarring*,  
 Through deathful endless space, flew on for aye!—  
 What would I say? Tut! Tut! Thou mak'st me mad!  
 (EXIT.)

We see and hear the world's destruction in this extraordinary passage. By imitative harmony, and a most skilful management of pause, he makes us thus behold the very movement and action described.

To have written his long poem in the same stanza, in the same heroic iambic, in the same blank verse,—to have written all in one strain would have been comparatively easy. Practice, at last, may make even the dullest blockhead perfect. To be ever new and varying requires not only invention and genius, but also constant study and labour. Hollingsworth, for this, gave up regularity of metre, and appeared in a different uniform on every occasion. By doing thus, he has given us, in metre at least, variety and invention—qualities in verse as rare as they are essential.

FIFTHLY. As a skilful musician imitates all on his instrument, so does Hollingsworth in his verse. We hear in his battle-scenes the clash of weapons; in his shipwreck, the roar of the tempest. We see the billows rise and fall.

'Tis midnight;—O, how dark is all!  
 The ship begins to roll and leap;—  
 The rain, as gushing stream, to fall  
*Into the black and yawning deep.*  
 How the *high black billows make her rise,*  
 Or *dive deep*, as they raging flow!  
 Now up, she seems to touch *the skies*;  
*Now down again* in the gulf below!  
 While foaming spray sweeps over the deck,  
 Shivering each plank, or dashing to wreck!  
 Now dread thunder, peal on peal,  
 Like a mighty god in ire,

*Starts them ;—makes the proudest kneel,  
Brandishing his sword of fire ;—  
Strikes with awe and wild despair,  
Even the boldest-hearted there.*

While in the alarm of battle :—

With lightning-speed,  
Through the torch-lit road, flies the fiery steed,  
Quick making the stones that it *dashes* o'er *flash* ;  
As the weapons *clash* ;  
And the minster-bell,  
Through the echoing *dell*,  
'Mid the shouts and *yell*,  
Tolls loud its deep dread awful *knell*,  
Awakening all with *quick start*.

The last line imitates the shudder of a man suddenly awoke by something terrible.

SIXTHLY. Above all he insisted on condensed expression :

An old saw taught—('tis ever new  
By telling what is always true)—  
*One little head so crack'd or mad  
Can make ten thousand more as bad.*

How condensed is the following :—

What that one says, is, was, and aye must be ;—  
Earth never fed a greater rogue than he !  
To grasp and crave ; to fawn, hate, wreak, and feast ;—  
If any do these well—it is a priest.

To brevity he frequently sacrifices symmetry, smoothness, and harmony, particularly where he requires force and powerful emphasis. Strong emphasis he uses wherever he wishes to impress strongly some fact or point of his speech, or where he desires to create pathetic effect. This strong emphasis he attains sometimes by a triplet :—

His life's great game is lost : its sweets are gall :  
His only glee is now to sneer at all.  
Full oft, with wounding gibe and laughing grin,  
He doles out truth ;—tears off the veil of sin :  
But never heeds if Good or 'Evil win.

Sometimes by shortening the last line :—

But what of this do mighty rulers ken ?  
Who slack the reins of kingdoms in their hold ;  
Then gamble with their poorer fellow-men,  
As dicers with their gold !

More in his mien, than in his words, is said :  
Which, as *he drawls* them, are as adder-stings.  
Heed not this evil one ; nor mind his spite,  
Or aught he ween in hate, to priests and kings.  
He is a laughing, waspish, sneering wight  
Who loves to say but bitter things.

We walk thus through the palace or the gaol,  
To gladden suffering man. Now, for thy weal,  
I come to thee ; lest Hope, grown weary, fail.  
For into these sad homes where gloom and want  
Cast down the soul, the fiend delights to steal ;  
And work eternal bale.

I hear and see them ;—see now all they wore.  
They seem not dead. 'Tis as if both were gone  
To far *far* land ;—will come ere long again :—  
Ah, never *never* more !

He spies the wounds of all to lay them bare ;  
And looks on nought, however good or fair,—  
On nought in this wide world, unless to find  
The bad that may be there.

We see in the following examples particularly the strong effect of these short lines, when used at proper times :—

It rises higher, having, on the right,  
A cliff whose peak would reach the silvering sky.  
Thence beetling huge out-bulging rocks of white  
Look down, and seem to fall.  
Yon wanderer underneath, now hurrying by,  
Hears startled eagle scream, and wild goat call.  
While, on the left, a frightful steep—  
A gulf too dread for human eye  
*Yawns, endless deep.*

Wildness and roughness here suit the subject described.

Again, portraying the Norwegian ranks :—

Now drawn up in a half-moon line,  
 They see our English hurrying on ;—  
 Our standard wave, our armour shine,  
 Bright glistening in the noon-day sun ;—  
 See, back of all, so far, so far,  
*A never-ending wave of war*  
*Come rolling on them :*  
 Yet, as high cliff on their dear strand  
 Looks down on raging storm beneath,  
 So they too *stand* ;—  
*So look on death.*

“Come rolling on them” has no rhyme ; for rhyme would have confined the idea expressed of that endless “wave of war ;” it would, too, have limited its flow : hence he leaves it to roll on wildly free. But where rhyme is required, there we have it very forcibly in :—

So they too *stand* ;—  
 So look on death.

He produces strong emphasis in the last line of the following extract, not only by the triplet, but also by artistically balancing an anapæst by a trochee and a spondee. The passage refers to Ercon in the dungeon. The priest informs him that he may walk abroad :—

PRIEST. Thou canst rove out with them.

ERC.

Ah, thanks to thee !

But what were blooming fields around ?—  
 What, fairest paradise to me ?—  
 What, all the world while thus I'm bound ?—  
 Thus know, I breathe not free ?  
 Clear lake were but as noisome stream ;  
 Sweet flowery valley's hill would seem  
 Like dungeon-wall of tyrant-foes ;  
 While, wither'd, droop'd the full-blown rose ;  
 And the mer | ry song | of free ones near  
*Fell* like | death-*knell* | o'er mourner's ear.  
 Oh ! What can pang the lofty soul—  
 So cast it down—as this dire thought ?  
 That man must walk by man's control ;—

That Heaven's free breath is sold and bought !  
 As keen frost nips the bloomful tree,  
 So this grim thought chills all in me ;  
*Blighting | each hope | as it strives | to be !*

In addition to what has been before stated, the beauty of the couplet must be apparent, "And the merry," &c. : where, in the first line, we have the quick anapæst for the "merry song;" and in the second line the falling death-knell in slow spondees, reminding us of the bell by its rhyme with "fell." If this line be pronounced slowly, its beauty will be evident.

To judge from his MSS., the Poet seems to have been always afraid of having a word too much. Hence his roughness. It is wholly owing to his love of the epigrammatic ;—not arising from want of art, but from art itself—from art that appeared to him the most consummated. We never find this roughness, but where it is required to express what is rough, or as a natural result of great condensation. No man knew better than he how to attain smoothness. He had studied Grimm too well not to be thoroughly acquainted with this. We find him, where he desires to be smooth, to be sometimes so—almost to weakness. One of his rules for smoothness is, "Two mute consonants shall never clash : where, for instance, one word ends with a mute-consonant, the following must begin with a liquid or a vowel, or *vice versâ* ; so that all the words in a line blend together, flow into one another, and thus become as one single word." This he calls in his papers, Fusion. Another of his rules is, "Exclude all Vandalic, hissing, whizzing, guttural sounds." We find smoothness particularly in the language of his heroines, in all his love-scenes, and wherever he deals with the tender, gentle, and feminine elements of poetry, as, for instance :—

Ah ! What can still in me this anxious fear !—  
 This endless longing after all so dear !—  
 Ah ! all so nigh—in musing, ever seen ;  
 Yet far as though wide oceans roll'd between !  
 These fetters grieve ; but hope and fear at strife—  
 This pining, yearning love wears out my life !

To thee, glad youth, the world's a blissful bower ;—  
 Sweet valley where but thornless roses grow.  
 How merrily thou whil'st away thine hour !  
 How brightly gleams life's crown upon thy brow !  
 O may'st thou ever bide as glad as now !  
 Thy past be yesterday ; thy future, morn !  
 Ne'er know the real world to fret or scorn !

ERC. In loving thee, I break the worldly link  
 That bound me down ;—feel now what angels think !  
 Ere, like a worm, I wallow'd on the sod ;—  
 Saw *thee*, and, lo ! the cherub saw his God !  
 What bliss is love ! Can angels joy in more ?  
 What ill elf would not let us meet before ?  
 I came—how often ! *Thou* wert aye so near ?  
 Yet aye so far ?—O *thou* than worlds more dear !  
 I wander'd hence !—could leave my land to roam—  
 Leave all I yearn'd to love so near my home !  
 Ha ! Thou wert fault, thou darling one, of this :  
 Who didst not come, and bring me so much bliss !

MEL. Heart-stealer ! Teach cold HOLCROFT how to woo ;—  
 And yet—teach not ; for then I'd love him too !—  
 So, lose my ERC ! How easy it would be  
 To wed this eve if he were aught like thee !

ERC. Give me that little straying lock of hair :—  
 Thou wilt not need it—thou wilt bide as fair ;  
 But I shall take a greater conquest home  
 Than ever mighty Cæsar did to Rome.

MEL. What pretty flatterer !—Ha ! Who rings so the bell ?  
 My maid may tell.—Alas ! how soon farewell !  
 But, if thou love so, come another day ;—  
 Tell father all. He'll be four nights away !—  
 A long *long* lonesome time to wait to know  
 What makes my whole life's bliss, or whole life's woe !

Some critics, reading these passages, have pronounced him—  
 Weak ; others, reading those in which he is as studiously  
 condensed and vigorous, have called him—Rough. Such is  
 the criticism of our age ! One critic contradicts the other ;  
 for, if rough, he cannot be weak. Roughness is a concomitant  
 of strength and vigour. These are produced by great con-  
 densation only. Where this is, there must be few vowels, and  
 many consonants ; and, where there are many consonants,

there must be roughness. Great condensation and smoothness are therefore incompatible. What is smooth and soft, is always weak,—bordering on the wishy-washy. Where Hollingsworth required not to be smooth, he wished above all things to be condensed, *i.e.* vigorous. Hence his short lines after longer ones,—hence his irregularity. When three feet expressed all, was he bound to spin out the line to five?—Was he bound to give it exactly “ten dull words,” by adding four useless unmeaning particles? These words, as they constantly occur in the works of our best Poets, were to him like blank windows, made to fill up, put in for symmetry only. Surely, see-saw and ding-dong are not necessary elements of poetry? We find Tennysonian regularity in his first uncorrected MSS. He would have saved himself a world of trouble by leaving them in this condition; and would then, moreover, have been regular and uniform. It was but by endless correcting and re-correcting, by great care, great study and labour, that he at last arrived at being—what his critics call—“careless, slovenly, wild, rough, and irregular.” Verily, a strange way to arrive at this result! Enough has now been quoted to show that there is in this so-called wildness or irregularity much method, system, and study. Condensation, easy as it may appear, is probably the most difficult of all attainments in composition. It cost the ancient Orators and Poets endless toil. It is in them one of those great excellences, to which they owe their immortality. Shakspeare, above all others, is condensed;—never more so than where he is most sublime.

See-saw regularity and uniformity are the most easily attained,—the most common of all things in versification. Any pot-house singer, any school-girl rhymers can give us these. They are not what Hollingsworth aimed at, and failed to attain; but exactly what he, by correction, threw to the dogs, and most avoided.

SEVENTHLY. Simplicity of language he was most ambitious of attaining. Throughout his “Childe Erconwold” there is scarcely one single inverted phrase. Though he ridicules Wordsworth for his non-inversion theory, and proves that the

great Laker was unable to use his own tools, Hollingsworth strictly adheres to the "Laker's" rules in this respect. No word is twisted out of its grammatical sphere to make rhyme. His rhyme seems to come of itself—apparently quite by accident :

Our sheen prank'd earls, our sceptred lord full thought  
And woe-foreboding gloom,  
Slow follow TOSTIG's corse that it be brought  
To kingly tomb.

To dote on one, yet doubt if that one be ;—  
To dread,—yet hope,—yet dread again,—what woe !  
Too soon, dear maid, this sorrow comes on thee ;  
But 'tis what all that love, must know.

Gaze not on the well-known garden ! Seek not there thy LITHA's bower !  
Gaze not on the banner flying proudly from his hated tower !  
Look not at yon snowy kerchief, greeting, waved by darling hand ;  
Lest, forgetting all but her, thou turn again and leave thy band.

He ne'er was gifted with the balmy speech,—  
The craft to soothe or heal the breast of woe  
(Which but kind Love in sorrow school'd can teach) ;  
Is, says the world, coldhearted, dull, and slow ;—  
The grave of all he feels and all may know.

What simplicity, with great condensation and vivid description, have we in the following extracts :—

He stoops ;— is lean ; has sleek black hair,  
Long hanging ; is outlandish dight :—  
Wears golden cap with raven-feather ;  
Short yellow cloak and tunic, bright  
But reckless hanging, loose, and wide ;—  
Has long hose bandaged with red leather ;  
And dagger dangling at his side.

What long white leer is under that black cowl !  
He's sad-eyed Thought's poor happy willing slave.  
He ne'er was heard to laugh ;—likes more to scowl.  
Smiles light his cheek as sunbeams light a grave.  
Above his bookshelf is :—" What dost thou crave ?  
" Life with the Living Dead ?—If so, friend, stay ;  
" But, if with our Dead Living, go thy way !"

His dice-mate is a gloomy fretful wight,  
 With olive leer and rolling eagle-eyes.  
 He, ne'er at ease, leans every way but right ;—  
 Now rubs his brow ;—now plays ;—now yawns and sighs.  
 What gnaws his heart ? *His* mind-worm never dies.  
 His worst of woes here is to think and be ;  
 His hardest toil, to make slow Time to flee.

We've some like him among our holy kin,—  
 Great popes in little Romes—'tis sad to see—  
 Who bear such lording brow, high drawn-up chin ;  
 Such love of might, such cold *cold* charitie ;  
 Who rage if any take their C for G ;  
 Or, with their meekness, love, and Christian glow,  
 Are oft themselves the gods they'd have us know.

See yon her fair white steed ;—her gold-locks fly  
 O'er silk hood, glittering gemm'd, of welkin-dye ;—  
 Her snowy kirtle ;—arms with shining rings ;—  
 Yon orange-hued, gilt-purpled, long robe waving ;  
 And silver whip in hand with golden strings.

ERC.

Who's he ?

STUR.

*My friend* ;—

The genius of our day, to whom all bend ;  
 The giant-mind that leads the gaping mass ;  
 The human lion o'er the human ass ;

With these extracts this critical examination may conclude.

Such were the articles of Hollingsworth's poetical creed as it regards style. We, then, arrive at these conclusions :—Insufferable to him was all that had not the elasticity, the grace, the wave, and gentle flow of Nature. Art to him was—Imitation of Nature in her wildness. He revelled in her forests, not in her fashionable parks. He choose for a pegasus her wild steed, leaving her tamed neatly trimmed carriage-horse to Tennyson and his school. He sought her roaring cataract,—not her bounded river and evenly-cut canal. He loved her daughter of the mountains and torrents,—not her painted affected artificial daughters resident in gilded saloons. In contempt of old established rules—in spite of his classical education—of all the models in his mind, ancient and modern,

native and foreign — Hollingsworth burst the shackles with which Learning fetters Genius; consulted at last this wild Nature only; and, self-conscious and headstrong, went his own way. For this, of course, he has been lashed, but never understood, by our Newspaper Would-be-Johnsons. Originality is criminal. As the elder "Disraeli" has most correctly said—"There is such a thing as Literary Fashion; and prose and verse have been regulated by the same caprice that cuts our coats and cocks our hats. . . . Different times are regulated by different tastes. What makes a strong impression on the public at one time, ceases to interest it at another; an author who sacrifices to the prevailing humour of his day, has but little chance of being esteemed by posterity." How serious is this fact to the great poets, but how consoling to the little ones of this generation! The same truth has been repeated by this great father's greater son, Benjamin Disraeli—"Institutions ever survive their purpose, and customs govern us when their cause is extinct." Be a servile imitator, but never be guilty of doing what our Solomons have not seen done before. Verily, it will be "utterly worthless," "rubbish," "trash," and so forth. Nor is this strange. Frail human nature hates your inventions. Do you not tell us by them that we all—we, the wise and great in our own sight, have so long been in the dark, and that you only have seen the light? Thus, where discoveries or new systems are understood, Pride and Envy are roused against them. Where they are *not* understood, you have a still worse antagonist in Ignorance, which ever arrogantly declaims against them. He who is not understood is ever condemned.

Hollingsworth has been accused of carelessness; but those who have seen his MSS. can testify that there is not a line in his works that was not frequently polished, corrected, and re-corrected. It is strange that the very passages which have been condemned as slovenly, are the very ones that cost him most labour. It has been objected to him that he was rough. But had he not a rough age to deal with? He calls up the rude warriors of the Conqueror's time, dresses them in their ancient

garments, decks them with their peculiar ornaments and weapons, and gives them a language most like their native Anglo-Saxon. He has been called irregular and wild. But are his heroes not of a wild age? Did he not wish to show this fair land of ours as it was in those dark monkish times; when this lovely England was a theatre of pillage and slaughter; when the moans of the waves, dashing against her cliffs, were echoed by the screams of eagles and the groans from the battle-field; when our blooming meads were black forests, where the ravens croaked and the wolves howled? Of such an age are his heroes: they must speak and act accordingly. He would have been more highly estimated, if he had been less studious, and artistic? Our Scotch reviewers would have liked him better, if he had sworn by their authorities, and been introduced to the public by some of themselves. Our English critics would have extolled him, if he had made King Harold and Tostig fine drawing-room gentlemen, chattering the slang of the day. Hollingsworth would then at least have been spared his great labour;—have been better understood, and probably more popular.

But he did nothing of the kind. He was the Poet of Nature, Nature in her universality.—Nature ere an artificial civilization had smothered the beautiful, and the true.

## APPENDIX.

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A FEW scraps from Hollingsworth's unpublished MSS. having appeared in *Notes and Queries*, it may, perhaps, be advisable to reprint them here.

On the 24th of April, during the present year, a Query was inserted regarding the derivation of the name of General Havelock. On the 22nd of May the following appeared:—

GENERAL HAVELOCK.

(2d S. v. 334.)

On looking over some of the MS. papers of Alfred Johnstone Hollingsworth, I came across the following passage in a small note-book. I send it you because it will probably furnish an answer to MR. CHARNOCK'S Query respecting the derivation of the name of our great General. The Author, having given the origin of several English names, continues:—

"I knew at school a lad named Havelock—a seldom name in England. It may have come from modern English. Why not? It is the great fault of all antiquaries to look to bygone times for every thing. Were our learned philologists asked for the derivation of Humbug, they would instinctively turn to their Latin, Greek, and Icelandic. . . . But there are names here (in Denmark) which remind me of my old school-fellow's. If of Danish origin, its derivation might be—1st. From *Have*, a garden, and *Lókke*, an enclosed piece of meadow for feeding cattle or deer; 2nd. From *Hav*, sea, and *Lóg*, a leek. But the most likely derivation is—3rd. From the verb *Have*, to have, and *Lykke*, luck, fortune. The last syllable, *ke*, is in provincial Danish frequently mute. The Jutland peasant says, '*A*' *veed ik*' for '*Jeg veed ikke*' (I know not). By a similar contraction, Danish *Lykke* has become English luck. Thus *Have-lykke* would have been pronounced *Have-lyk*, the *y* being sounded as French *u*, which, being so difficult to Englishmen, would soon have become English *u*. Hence we should have Haveluck,

which corrupted has become Havelock and Hasluck. Of the latter name there are not a few in England. So much for my schoolfellow Tom Havelock's name. It might thus have come from an old Danish surname which in heroic times graced some invincible *Viking*. *Harald Havelykke* (Harold the Lucky) would not have been stranger than *Harald Tveeskjaeg* (Harold the Forkbearded), or *Valdimar Atterdag* (Valdimar Another-day). A curious book might be written on derivations of English names. Some day I think I shall try it."

This philological Poet little knew when penning these remarks in his note-book, that he was scribbling down the derivation of a name which in a few years was to become so famous—a name to be immortalized, though not by a *Viking*, yet by a warrior whose deeds of daring might well entitle him to be called *The Invincible*, or *The Lucky*. Somewhat farfetched as this latter derivation may appear, it would doubtless be preferred to that suggested by MR. CHARNOCK. Had the great General known that his name betokened *Have Luck*, *Have Fortune*, might it not have strengthened, if not *his* confidence of success, at least that of his men, for soldiers and sailors see much in a name, being generally superstitious?

GEORGE SEXTON.

The Author of the present Essay, anxious to know whether a particular superstition referred to by Hollingsworth was at all common, sent the following Query, which appeared on May 15th :

*Folk Lore*.—In Hollingsworth's *Childe Erconwold* occurs the following :

"Hast thou never read,  
When trees in calm air move, then speak the dead?"

Can any of the readers of *Notes and Queries* inform me whether this superstition is known in any part of England?

THE EDITOR OF HOLLINGSWORTH'S WORKS.

On June 5th, a gentleman, a native of Norway, replied as follows:—

"*When trees in calm air move, then speak the dead*!" (2d S. v. 391.)—This verse in Hollingsworth's *Childe Erconwold* alludes to a superstition which in my native Norway and throughout Scandinavia

is very common. If it exists in England, it was probably first introduced by the Danish invaders. This is the more probable as I never heard of it in Germany.

Having answered this question, permit me to ask one. There is an allusion in the remarkable *Memoirs of Hollingsworth* to his unpublished poetical Anglo-Saxon MSS. Would their Editor, Dr. Sexton, inform me of the nature of them? Are they in the old Anglo-Saxon alliteration, or in modern metre with rhyme?

L. SEVERIN.

This rendered necessary some explanations regarding Hollingsworth's unpublished MSS., the following poems were therefore sent, and appeared on July 3rd:—

HOLLINGSWORTH'S ANGLO-SAXON POEMS.

(2nd S. v. 467.)

In answer to the Query of Mr. SEVERIN, as to whether the poems of Hollingsworth are in the old alliterative Beowulf style, or in modern metre with rhyme, permit me to say that this Poet has left many original works. One of these is a complete dramatic poem in blank verse, varied by modern metres with rhyme; and others, translations of celebrated passages from the principal British Poets. Amongst the latter he has brought before us Shakspeare's Richard soliloquising,—

“Now is the winter of our discontent;”

Milton's Satan scoffing—

“Is this the region, this the soil;”

and Byron sighing his “Fare thee well” in the language of the venerable Bede and Alfred the Great.

Of these very singular MSS., which show the peculiar learning and genius of Hollingsworth, I can give but a very imperfect idea by submitting the following two short original pieces. They are the first that have as yet been made public; and should you be able to find room for them in your valuable periodical, they will probably interest some of your numerous Anglo-Saxon readers.

GEORGE SEXTON,

*Editor of Hollingsworth's Works.*

## Tó þám RÚN-GÁSTE.

“ Ut of sáwle deópan grunde,  
 þe þám wisan deágel is,  
 Rúnað Gást on stillre stunde,  
 Ymb sum bet're líf þe þis.

Ac hwá mæg his rúna reccan ?  
 Hwá his heolster-spræce ræt ?  
 A'ne beám he sylð þám wreccan :—  
 Hine þonn' on tweon for-læt.

þis se býð þe ýwað cilde  
 Sóð þe wiss or-feorme sécð :—  
 Grimman men þe leofað wilde,  
 Ymbe God and Heofen recð ;—

Rúnað him heáh-þungen-fæge,  
 þá he get on heápe lið,  
 Ymbe beáh þe winnan mæge ;—  
 Rinc þe he tó beónne býð.

Deór ys líf ; and wlitig, eorðe ;  
 Wlíte-torht, þis swegel-weorc !  
 Manne ferhð—Lá ! Hú un-weorðe !—  
 Earm and wædla, eng' and deorc !

Hwanon com ic ? Hwider fare ?  
 Dýsig þonne ! Dýsig nú !  
 Hwá, Gást, áh þa sóðan láre—  
 Rihte læreð bútan þú ?

Heofen-weard ic wende eagan ;—  
 Wundrigende, swigend', stand' :  
 þonn', me þincð, ic hýr' þé sagan :  
 ‘ Geondan ys þæt deóre land ! ’

Uppe ! Tæc men and on-órða  
 þæt he seó his lytelnyss' ;  
 Bile-hwít swá bearn ge-weorðe ;  
 Engel-gód, and God-gewís ! ”

---

## FOR-HWY SWINCEST þú?

“Hit swigung ys. Get swincende ic rece,  
 Wið dimmum leohte, wísan dyrnan stæf;  
 And ána, blác, mid Nihte Grimmum, wæcce :  
 þá still’ ys eall swá græf.

Hwý swinc’? Hit nys for woruld-gilp and áre,  
 þæt ic of-gife eall swá oðrum swæs :  
 Ic wát þæt eom : þurh world ne weorð’ ic máre,—  
 þurh world, náht næfre læs !

Hér scólu ys : á úton blíðe gréne :  
 þær mót se besta þegen sélost buan ;  
 Him eall ys swétost, fægrost þær, ic wéne ;  
 Ne náht má dyrne rún.

þes læn-dæg swinc-full ys : get fint man reste  
 þá weorc wel dón ys ; þám heó swétost býð  
 þe worthe mæst, and Hearran willan læste ;  
 þeah plega wære ýð.

Hér eom ic scealc ;—wæs hider send on ærend’ ;  
 And glenge þæs Hláfordes deóran gim :  
 Ic swinc’ þæt, þá he þone wille weran,  
 Ne beó ne fúl ne dim.”

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